

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims replaces all prior listings of claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A method of executing an information retrieval query in a multiserver computing environment, the method comprising:

requesting N unsorted results with an offset M from a first of a plurality of partial index servers in the multiserver computing environment,

receiving the N unsorted results, the N unsorted results having keys K1, . . . , KN;

requesting M unsorted results from each other of the plurality of partial index servers, the request for the M unsorted results defining that each of the N unsorted results has the same keys Kj of the respective N unsorted results requested from the first of the plurality of partial index servers, and wherein (1 ≤ j ≤ N);

distributing the query among each of a plurality of partial index servers in the multiserver environment;

calculating a subset of results for each of the plurality of partial index servers; and

merging the subset of results in one logical index server to generate a merged result.

2. (Original) A method in accordance with claim 1, further comprising receiving the query from a frontend computer system.

3. (Original) A method in accordance with claim 2, further comprising sending the merged result to the frontend computer system.

4. (Canceled).

5. (Currently Amended) A method of executing an information retrieval query in a multiserver computing environment, the method comprising:
distributing the query among each of a plurality of partial index servers in the multiserver environment by:

requesting N sorted results with an offset M from each of the plurality of partial index servers; and—

merging C results from each of the plurality of partial index servers in one logical index server, wherein C is much greater than N and represents an upper bound on the number of results that needs to be considered in order to obtain the N results required, the value C being determined by:

first determining a sum G of the Cth aggregate values for the plurality of partial index servers; and

second determining a value H representing the (N+M)th aggregate value; and if G ≥ H, resetting C to a new value;

obtaining missing aggregate values from each partial server that did not send particular keys using the new value of C to generate supplemental results; and merging the C results and the supplemental results by the logical index server.

6-10 (Canceled).

11. (New) A method of executing a query in a multiserver computing environment for N sorted results with offset M, the method comprising:

initiating a query on each of a plurality of partial index servers;

evaluating results of the query in parallel on each of the plurality of partial index servers;

sending a predefined number of top partial results from each of the partial index servers to a logical server;

merging the sent top partial results from the respective partial index servers by the logical server;

determining whether the predefined number is sufficiently large to return results from one or more of the partial index servers for one or more keys;

finding deltas for keys missing on one or more of the partial index servers;

discarding merged aggregate values below the predefined number on the logical server;

selecting missing aggregate values from the partial index servers having missing keys;

and

merging all obtained results.